

What is claimed is:

1. A method of encoding a video signal representing a sequence of pictures, the method comprising comparing a first picture with a second picture, calculating a measure of the similarity between the first and the second pictures, comparing the measure of similarity with a predetermined criterion of similarity and, when the measure of similarity does not meet the predetermined criterion of similarity, outputting an indicator indicating that a non-temporally predictive error concealment method should be used by a subsequent decoder and, when the measure of similarity meets the predetermined criterion of similarity, outputting an indicator indicating that a temporally predictive error concealment method should be used by a subsequent decoder.
2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the indicator is updated when the measure of similarity does not meet the predetermined criterion of similarity.
3. A method according to claim 1 or 2 wherein the indicator is included in a picture header.
4. A method according to claim 3 wherein the video signal is encoded according to the H.263 standard and the indicator is included in the Supplemental Enhancement Information.
5. A method of encoding a video signal representing a sequence of pictures, the method comprising comparing a first picture with a second picture, calculating a measure of the similarity between the first and the second pictures, comparing the measure of similarity with a predetermined criterion of similarity and outputting an indicator in response to the measure of similarity wherein, when the measure of similarity does not meet the predetermined criterion, the indicator is updated and when the measure of similarity meets the predetermined criterion, the indicator is unchanged.

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6. A method of decoding an encoded video signal representing a sequence of pictures, the method comprising receiving an encoded video signal, identifying for each picture to be decoded an indicator indicating the type of concealment method to be used in the decoding process and
5 decoding the encoded video signal using a concealment method of the identified type.

7. A method of error concealment comprising receiving an encoded video
10 signal including an indicator indicating the type of concealment method to be used in the error concealment process and concealing the error in the video signal appropriately.

8. A method of decoding an encoded video signal representing a
15 sequence of pictures, the method comprising receiving an encoded video signal, identifying for each picture to be decoded an indicator representing the measure of similarity between a first picture and a second picture and, when the indicator is the same as that of a previously received picture, applying a temporal predictive error concealment method and, when the indicator is the
20 different from that of a previously received picture, applying a spatial error concealment method.

9. A video encoder comprising an input for receiving a video signal representing a sequence of pictures, a calculator to calculate a measure of
25 the similarity between a first and a second picture, and a comparator to compare the measure of similarity with a predetermined criterion of similarity and to output an indicator indicating the concealment method to be used by a subsequent decoder, the comparator being arranged to output an indicator indicating that a non-temporally predictive concealment method should be
30 used when the measure of similarity does not meet the predetermined criterion, and, when the measure of similarity meets the predetermined

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criterion, to output an indicator indicating that a temporally predictive concealment method should be used by a subsequent decoder.

10. A video encoder for encoding a video signal representing a sequence of pictures, the encoder comprising a comparator for comparing a first picture with a second picture, a processor for calculating a measure of the similarity between the first and the second pictures and comparing the measure of similarity with a predetermined criterion of similarity, the processor being arranged to output an indicator in response to the measure of similarity wherein, when the measure of similarity does not meet the predetermined criterion, the indicator is updated and when the measure of similarity meets the predetermined criterion, the indicator is unchanged.

11. A video decoder comprising an input for receiving an encoded video signal representing a sequence of pictures, a controller for identifying within the video signal for each picture to be decoded an indicator indicating the type of concealment method to be used in the decoding process, and decoding the encoded video signal using a concealment method as indicated by the indicator.

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- 505 a37 12. A portable radio communications device including an encoder according to claim 9 or 10 and/or a decoder according to claim 10 or 11.

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